

# Goebbels on the Jews, Part 1

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Joseph Goebbels was nothing if not disciplined. Since his 26th birthday in late 1923, he maintained a near-daily diary until his death more than 21 years later.<sup>[1]</sup> These entries are at once unique and invaluable in their ability to provide insight into the Nazi hierarchy, ideology, and operation. Nothing else like them exists. No other leading Nazi figure recorded such personal and intimate thoughts on an on-going basis throughout the war. Hitler's *Mein Kampf* was written in 1923 and 1924, but he published nothing later. The comments recorded in *Hitler's Table Talk* (1953) are the closest to Goebbels' writings, but these cover in detail only the period July 1941 to September 1942, and they furthermore have not much to add to the topic at hand. We of course have the speeches by Hitler, Goebbels, Himmler and other leading figures, but such words were designed for an intended effect and did not necessarily give an honest and unvarnished representation of ideas or events. Goebbels's diaries were held private for his entire life. He never intended to publish them, although he clearly expected them to survive the war as a permanent record of his thoughts, for posterity. They offer us an irreplaceable look at Nazi history and evolution, the lead-up and conduct of the war, and, especially, Nazi policy on the Jews.



*Joseph Goebbels 1942. In his diary entry for July 26, 1940, he writes: "The big plan for the evacuation (Evakuierung) of the Jews from Berlin was approved. Additionally, all the Jews of Europe are supposed to be deported (deportiert) to Madagascar after the war."*

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Having earned his PhD in history and philology at Heidelberg in 1921, Goebbels first encountered Hitler in Munich the next year. He joined the NSDAP in 1924, and began editing an early Nazi newspaper in 1925. Goebbels quickly earned the attention of Hitler, and was named *Gauleiter* (district leader) of Berlin in October 1926. He founded a major Nazi periodical, *Der Angriff*, in 1927, and by 1929 was named Reich Propaganda Minister. Goebbels was thus well-placed by the time Hitler and the NSDAP acceded to power in 1933. He was the most intelligent and well-educated of the Nazi leaders.<sup>[2]</sup> In a very short time Goebbels, along with Hitler and Göring, came to comprise the leadership ‘trinity’ of the early Nazi party. As the war progressed Göring fell from grace, leaving Goebbels as the de facto second-in-command of the Third Reich. He eclipsed even Himmler, who was in the end more an enforcer than leader. Into the 1940s, Goebbels “was the most important and influential man after Hitler...[B]y 1943, he was virtually running the country while Hitler was running the war.”<sup>[3]</sup> Thus Goebbels was uniquely situated to comment on, and help resolve, the Jewish Question (*Judenfrage*). To this end, his diaries are absolutely essential for understanding the Jewish holocaust.

The diaries themselves first surfaced a few years after the war. An unknown scavenger came upon the bundles of originals—some 7,000 pages in total—in the ruins of the official German archives. Pages were burned, soaked, and many were missing. They “passed through several hands,” eventually becoming acquired by an American diplomat.<sup>[4]</sup> In 1948 a (very) partial English translation by Louis Lochner appeared, on selected entries from 1942 and 1943. Unknown at the time, the Soviets had acquired a full set of glass plate prints of the entire diary series, amounting to roughly 75,000 individual sheets. By various obscure means, portions leaked out over the years. Then in 1992, David Irving (re)discovered the full set in the Soviet archives, and was able to fill in all the missing gaps. These were put to good use in his 1996 work *Goebbels: Mastermind of the Third Reich*—the only complete biography published to date.

Today, there are four English translations of different parts of the diary: (1) the original Lochner translation; (2) Oliver Watson’s “early entries,” from the years 1925-1926; (3) Fred Taylor’s translation of the period 1939-1941; and (4) Richard Barry’s “final entries” of 1945. These four books combined constitute not more than 10% of the total; a full 90% of the diaries have never appeared in English.

Fortunately, though, with Irving’s discovery in 1992, the German publisher Saur was able to produce a complete and authoritative set, in the German original: *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels*. The full set runs to 29 volumes of roughly 500 pages each, and is divided into 2 parts (or *Teils*): Part 1 from 1923-1941, and Part 2 from 1941-1945. The final volume was released only in 2006, and so the complete set is still relatively new to researchers. Very few have made good use of it.

Of particular interest here are Goebbels’s disclosures about Nazi policy toward a final solution (*Endlösung*) of the Jewish Question, which of course directly relate to our conception of the Holocaust. On the standard view, the entire Nazi leadership, Hitler above all, were rabid anti-Semites who would settle for nothing less than the mass murder of every Jew they could get their hands on. They allegedly pursued this objective even to the detriment of the war effort, and rounded up and gassed Jews until the final few months. Their alleged 6 million victims were burned, buried, or otherwise made to vanish, such that traces of a mere fraction of these bodies have ever been found.

There are, as we know, many problems with this account. First is the fact that no ‘extermination order’ from Hitler has ever been discovered—nor even any tangible reference to such.<sup>[5]</sup> Hilberg was reduced

to nonsense in his “mind reading” statement of 1983,[\[6\]](#) and even as late as 2003 he was compelled to write:

*The process of destruction...did not, however, proceed from a basic plan. ... The destruction process was a step-by-step operation, and the administrator could seldom see more than one step ahead. ... In the final analysis, the destruction of the Jews was not so much a product of laws and commands as it was a matter of spirit, of shared comprehension, of consonance and synchronization. (2003: 50-52)*

Even preeminent British Hitler expert Ian Kershaw could not do much better. The Soviet archives were opened up in the early 1990s; “predictably, a written order by Hitler for the ‘Final Solution’ was not found. The presumption that a single explicit written order had ever been given had long been dismissed by most historians” (2008: 96). Rather, this most momentous destruction of human life occurred via “improvised bureaucratic initiatives whose dynamic prompted a process of ‘cumulative radicalization’ in the fragmented structures of decision-making in the Third Reich” (p. 94)—a statement hardly more coherent than Hilberg’s.

Nothing in Goebbels’s diaries changes this situation. As Irving (1996: 388)[\[7\]](#) observes, “Nowhere do the diary’s 75,000 pages refer to an explicit order by Hitler for the murder of the Jews.” On the contrary: we find repeated and consistent reference only to expulsion and deportation.

Second, and more importantly, once the alleged extermination process was underway, we have no direct evidence that either Hitler or Goebbels knew anything about it—which is inconceivable. Below I consider the account given by Kershaw (2000). He undertakes an amazing series of gyrations to argue that Hitler both planned the genocide of the Jews and knew about its progress, despite the lack of any evidence. His points overlap with the diary entries, which I will cover below. Suffice to say here that, on Kershaw’s reading, Hitler was incredibly aloof on the Jewish Question. “Even in his inner circle Hitler could never bring himself to speak with outright frankness about the killing of the Jews” (p. 487)—in other words, he never, ever spoke openly about this most-vital aspect of the entire Nazi program. Hitler’s comments were always “confined to generalities,” sprinkled in with the “occasional menacing allusion.” Thus, with a mere wink and a nod, the mass murder of 6 million Jews was effected.

Given the striking lack of evidence, and the inconceivability that mass murder of millions was underway without awareness at the top, only two alternatives are possible: (1) the Nazi hierarchy knew all about the mass murder but mutually agreed to never discuss it, or to refer to it only in euphemisms and code language—even in the most private of settings; or (2) no systematic mass murder occurred at all, and the reality was in fact just as they said: expulsion and deportation, along with a certain degree of incidental death. I would suggest that a detailed look at Goebbels’s diary entries, in conjunction with the alleged ‘extermination’ actions that were occurring at the same time, may shine some light on this dispute.

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To the best of my knowledge only two English books cite the diary in any detail: Irving’s *Goebbels* (1996) and Kershaw’s *Hitler 1936-1945: Nemesis* (2000).[\[8\]](#) Irving, especially in the longer Internet version, captures many important passages on the Jewish Question, but this is clearly not his main concern. Kershaw has a large number of quotations, but most are only partial, out of context, and designed to cast a certain light on Hitler. To his credit, and unlike many other works, Kershaw does a good job of

including the original German words for the key terms, especially those relating to expulsion, evacuation, 'elimination,' and the like.

There are at least three concerns for any foreign-language translation, and these loom particularly large here. First, inclusion of the original language on key words and phrases is essential; it allows the reader to be fully informed about the actual original text. Second, passages should be cited as fully as possible, in order to retain context. Third is the translation itself, which is always problematic. Again, particularly so in this case, as many traditionalist writers are anxious to portray Goebbels's language—which ranges from benign to ambiguous—in as ominous a light as possible. On these three counts, Irving does a reasonably good job, lacking only the extended quotations that are preferable. Kershaw does well on the first point, but fails on the other two—as I will show. Of the published (partial) translations, Lochner comes in for notable censure.

In what follows I cite Goebbels's reflections on the Jews and Jewish policy in full. This is quite easy because, in virtually every case, the entry consists only of a few sentences or a short paragraph or two. I also include the German original for every contentious word or phrase. To maintain context, all entries are in chronological order. Following the date for each entry is original citation information from the *Tagebücher*: Part # (*Teil*), Volume # (*Band*), and page number. Hence, (II.3.478) refers to Part 2, volume 3, page 478.

In total, I include below the entries for 123 different days, ranging from May 1937 to April 1945. Of these, 43 appear in one of the published translation books; the remaining 80 entries are previously unpublished, and appear here for the first time in English. (Of course many scattered portions of these entries do appear elsewhere, primarily in the Irving and Kershaw books. But none in full.) Where the entries are those found in existing translations, I have identified them with asterisks (\*=Taylor, \*\*=Lochner, \*\*\*=Barry). Furthermore, I have maintained their wording, except when essential corrections were necessary—cited in the subsequent commentary.

To be as thorough as possible, it was my original aim to include every significant entry on the Jews or the Jewish Question. But in a 29-volume set these proved too numerous for the present essay. Hence I will focus on the key time period, bounded by two significant events: *Kristallnacht*, and the deportation of the Hungarian Jews. Thus for the period from 1 September 1938 through 30 June 1944, I have included literally every noteworthy entry by Goebbels.<sup>[9]</sup> This exhaustive survey, covering nearly six years, gives the most complete picture possible of his perspective on the Jewish holocaust.

Before addressing the central period I want to mention a few early passages. The first passing reference to the "Jewish Question" (*Judenfrage*) appears very early in the diary: 15 March 1924 (Part 1, vol. 1)—coincident with the first reference to Hitler. It was clearly a concern from his earliest days in the Party. But serious action against the Jews did not begin until more than a decade later, in the late 1930s. For example:

*May 5, 1937 (I.4.124)*

*The elimination of Jewish influence (Entjudung—lit. 'de-Jewing') in the Reich Chamber of Culture moves forward. I will not be at peace until it is completely free of Jews\.*

*Nov 30, 1937 (I.4.429)*

*Long discussion on the Jewish Question. My new law is almost finished. But that is not the goal. The Jews*

*must leave Germany, and get completely out (aus...heraus) of Europe. It will still take some time, but it needs to happen. The Führer is determined to do so\.*

Here we have, I believe, the first reference to the complete removal of the Jews—a full year prior to *Kristallnacht*. Then into 1938 we find the first mention of the ‘Madagascar plan’:

*Apr 11, 1938 (I.5.256)*

*Long discussion at breakfast, on the Jewish Question. The Führer wants the Jews completely squeezed out (herausdrängen) of Germany. To Madagascar, or some such place. Right!*

*Apr 23, 1938 (I.5.269-270)*

*Speaking with Helldorf on the Jewish Question. ... We will take from Berlin the character of a Jewish paradise. Jewish shops will be identified. In any case we will now proceed more radically. Negotiations with Poland and Romania. Madagascar would be the most suitable for [the Jews]\.*

At least into early 1942 (see entry for March 7), it was seriously proposed to round up all the European Jews and ship them to Madagascar, which was to be forcibly acquired from France. This fact, of course, is of central importance to the holocaust: if the Nazis wanted to ship them out, then obviously there was no plan for mass murder. To further complicate the traditional account, we need only observe that Chelmno, Auschwitz, and Belzec were all allegedly underway in March 1942. And in fact it is worse than this, because talk of deportation continues right up until the end of the war.

I would further note Goebbels’s use of the word ‘radical,’ which evidently means the mass expulsion of several million Jews, with little regard for their long-term well being. Also, the focus on Berlin: as local *Gauleiter*, Goebbels placed top priority on cleansing the city of its Jews. We see this over and over in the entries to follow. In fact this often seems to take priority over a total cleansing of the Reich—which again does not fit well with the exterminationist thesis.

I now begin with the entries from 1 September 1938. The first notable item is an early observation on America:

*Sep 17, 1938 (I.6.95)*

*Afternoon meeting with our diplomat in Washington, Dieckhoff. He expresses a similar situation as Gienandt. At the moment it is hopeless. Everything depends on our position with England. Roosevelt is our enemy. He is surrounded by Jews. In a European conflict, if England stands against us, then so too will America\.*

In the run-up to *Kristallnacht*, we find evidence of Goebbels’s involvement with anti-Jewish actions the month before:

*Oct 12, 1938 (I.6.142)*

*Helldorf gives me a report on the status of the Jewish action in Berlin. It proceeds systematically. And the Jews now gradually withdraw\.*

Then we have the event itself, triggered in part by the murder of Ernst vom Rath, German diplomat in Paris. He was shot by a Jewish teenager, Herschel Grynszpan.

*Nov 10, 1938 (I.6.180-181)*

*In Kassel and Dessau there were large demonstrations against the Jews, synagogues burned and shops*

*demolished. In the afternoon the death of our [Paris] diplomat vom Rath was announced. I go to the Party reception in the old town hall. A huge operation. I present the Führer. He states: let the demonstrations continue. Police are to withdraw. The Jews should feel the public wrath. That is only right. I give appropriate instructions to the police and Party. Then I have a short discussion with Party leadership. Everyone rushes to the phones. Now the people will act\.*

*We must not let this cowardly murder [of vom Rath] go unanswered. Let things follow their course. The Hitler Patrol cleans house in Munich. A synagogue is smashed to pieces. I try to save it from the fire; but I fail\.*

*The Patrol has done some vicious work. A message runs out across the Reich: 50-75 synagogues burned. The Führer has ordered the immediate arrest of 25,000-30,000 Jews. That will have an effect. They will now see that our patience has run out\.*

*When I go into the hotel, all the windowpanes rattle. Bravo! Bravo! In all large cities the synagogues burn. German property is not threatened\.*

*The first reports come early in the morning. It has been a raging fury. Just as expected. The whole nation is in turmoil. This murder will be very expensive for the Jews. The dear Jews will think carefully in the future before shooting German diplomats\.*

To this day it is unclear to what extent the riots were spontaneous outbreaks of anti-Semitism, or well-planned instigations by plain-clothed security men.

*Nov 13, 1938 (I.6.185)*

*Heydrich reports on the actions: 190 synagogues burned and destroyed. Conference with Göring on the Jewish Question. Hot battles over the solution. I argue for a radical solution. Funk is somewhat soft and yielding. The result: a fine of one billion Marks is imposed on the Jews. In the shortest period of time, they will be completely excluded (ausgeschlossen) from economic life. They can no longer run businesses. ... A whole series of other measures is planned. In any case, a clean sheet has now been made. I work well with Göring. He also attacks this sharply. The radical view has prevailed. I draft a very sharp public communiqué\.*

Again, more talk of the 'radical' solution as total exclusion from public life. Then two follow-up entries:

*Nov 22, 1938 (I.6.195)*

*We are planning a series of new measures against the Jews. I have a long phone call with Göring, who is coordinating all the actions. He approaches it harshly. In Berlin we do more than anywhere else in the Reich. That's also necessary, because we have so many Jews. But the actions have also destroyed much. Good that it's over\.*

*Nov 26, 1938 (I.6.202)*

*Situation report: almost exclusively on the Jewish Question. Partly positive, partly negative. We must enlighten the public, and especially the intellectuals, on the Jewish Question\.*

In late November, two more interesting observations on America:

Nov 27, 1938 (I.6.203)

Roosevelt speaks out ever harsher against us. He is totally in the hands of the Jews. A Jew-slave, perhaps even of Jewish ancestry\.

Dec 17, 1938 (I.6.223)

America is strongly against us. On the Jewish Question it makes impertinent remarks. It is surely also a Jew-state!

The year 1939 opened with this entry, as a follow-up to the 5 May 1937 comment:

Jan 26, 1939 (I.6.239) \*

The elimination of Jewish influence (Entjudung) in the Reich Chamber of Culture continues. But now considerable financial difficulties are apparent. We shall overcome them\.

Four days later, on January 30, Hitler gave his famous Reichstag speech of 1939. This was remarkable on several counts. It was sprinkled with many references to international Jewry (*internationale Judentum*), the Jewish world-enemy (*jüdischen Weltfeind*), and the Jewish Question generally. It was a grand event, the equivalent of a presidential joint session of Congress. The cameras and microphones were running. Among some initial remarks on the Jewish Question, he states that the “foreign peoples” must be “pushed out” (*abzuschieben*) in order to allow the Germans to arise. The key section occurs in the middle of the speech: “Europe cannot find peace until the Jewish Question is resolved.” Jewry too often lives off the work of others; unless they begin to perform true, productive work, they will sooner or later “succumb to a crisis of unimaginable proportions.” He continues:

*Many times in my life I have been a prophet, and was often laughed at. At the time of my struggle for power, it was primarily the Jewish people who accepted my prophecies with laughter. ... I believe that this time the laughter of the Jews in Germany is stuck in their throats. Today I will again be a prophet: If the international Jewish financiers in and outside Germany should succeed in plunging the nations once again into a world war, then the result will be not the Bolshevization of the Earth and with it the victory of Jewry, but rather the destruction (Vernichtung) of the Jewish race in Europe\.*

Here, for all the world to see, Hitler is predicting the ‘destruction,’ or perhaps ‘annihilation,’ of the Jews. At issue is the meaning of this word *Vernichtung*. Its root, *nicht*, means ‘none’ or ‘nothing’. Bilingual dictionaries translate it as either ‘destruction’ or ‘extermination.’

So what can the “*Vernichtung* of the Jewish race” mean? On the standard view, of course, this means mass murder: literal genocide, the killing of every Jew. But there are two problems here.

First, *Vernichtung*, along with the English equivalents ‘destruction’ and ‘extermination’, are inherently ambiguous. To ‘destroy’ is literally to ‘de-structure’ or ‘deconstruct’ (Latin: *de-struere*). To destroy an individual person or animal is to kill it, but to destroy a collective—a city, a nation, a race—is to ruin its structural coherence, and cause it to cease to exist as a collective entity. [\[10\]](#) This of course would happen if every individual member were killed, but it in no way demands this. Likewise with ‘extermination’, which means, literally, to ‘push beyond the boundaries’ (Latin: *ex-terminus*). To exterminate is simply to ‘get rid of completely’, by whatever means. And in fact the leading traditionalists evidently agree with these benign interpretations. Kershaw, for example, goes to great pains to argue that there was neither plan nor intention of mass murder prior to September 1941. Browning (2004: 371) comes to a similar conclusion.

The second problem is this: How likely is it that Hitler would declare to the world his intention to murder an entire race? Kershaw (2000: 522) pointedly emphasizes Hitler's "intense preoccupation with secrecy"; the mass murder scheme was "a secret to be carried to the grave." But wait—he already announced it to the world in January 1939! Does it even make sense to then keep such a thing secret? Or perhaps there was no secret to keep.

For some unknown reason, Goebbels does not comment on the Reichstag speech—at least, in the days and months that followed. (Down the road he would see it as something of a milestone.) In fact for the next 10 months one finds no substantial reference to the Jewish Question at all. Perhaps pressing matters of war intervened. Czechoslovakia disintegrated in March and Germany was thereby compelled to occupy the territory. With much inducement from England, Poland undertook a series of belligerent actions, resulting in the German-Polish war that began on September 1. Two days later this regional war became a European one, when France and the UK declared war on Germany. Comments by Goebbels resumed in October:

*Oct 7, 1939 (I.7.141)*

*The Jewish problem will probably be the hardest to solve. These Jews are no longer human beings. [They are] predators equipped with a cold intellect, which must be counteracted\.*

*Oct 17, 1939 (I.7.157)*

*This Jewry must be destroyed (vernichtet)\.*

...taking a cue, perhaps, from Hitler. The remainder of the year includes comments again consistent with removal, and no evidence of contemplated murder. The mention of typhus (December 6) is significant; as we know, this was undoubtedly the cause of death for many in the ghettos and camps, both Jews and non-Jews.

*Nov 3, 1939 (I.7.179-180)*

*With the Führer. I give him a report on my trip to Poland, which interests him greatly. Above all, my exposition on the Jewish problem earns his full support. Judaism is a waste product. More clinical than social issue\.*

*Dec 5, 1939 (I.7.220-221)*

*[The Führer] shares my view on the Jewish and Polish questions. The Jewish danger must be banished (gebannt) by us. But it will still return in a few generations. There is no real panacea\.*

*Dec 6, 1939 (I.7.222)*

*Du Prel reports on the situation in the General Government. Horrible! There is still much to do. Nothing has changed in Warsaw. A typhus epidemic and famine have broken out. In Lublin, they're waiting for the expelled (abgeschobenen) Jews\.*

*Dec 19, 1939 (I.7.236-237) \**

*The Jews are attempting to infiltrate cultural life again. Particularly half-Jews. When they are serving with the armed forces, they have some reason on their side. Nevertheless, I reject all requests in this area\.*

*My thoughts on the Jewish Question in wartime meet with the Führer's approval. He intends to clear (heraushaben) all half-Jews from the Wehrmacht. Otherwise there will be continual 'incidents.'*



Through the entire first half of 1940 we find, again, no entries on the Jews. Germany was racking up military successes, culminating in the invasion of the Low Countries on May 10 and the push to the Channel. France was quickly overwhelmed, and German troops marched into Paris on June 14. Things were going very well; the war appeared to be heading toward a rapid conclusion; and then the Jewish Question could be addressed in earnest.

*Jun 6, 1940 (I.8.159)*

*We will quickly be finished with the Jews after the war\.*

*Jul 6, 1940 (I.8.207)*

*The American Jewish press is entirely on Churchill's side. Now, suddenly, France is no longer the ideal democratic nation. Riff-raff that must be eradicated (ausgerottet)\.*

*Jul 20, 1940 (I.8.229)*

*One must neutralize the habitual criminal before the crime, not after. Our lawyers will never understand that. The Jews also belong in this category, and one must make short shrift (kurzen Prozess) of them\.*

By July the question of Berlin had again arisen, as had the Madagascar plan:

*Jul 26, 1940 (I.8.238)*

*The big plan for the evacuation (Evakuierung) of the Jews from Berlin was approved. Additionally, all the Jews of Europe are supposed to be deported (deportiert) to Madagascar after the war\.*

*Aug 17, 1940 (I.8.276) \**

*Later on, we want to ship (verfrachten) the Jews to Madagascar. There they can build their own state\.*

*Sep 2, 1940 (I.8.301)*

*I fly to Kattowitz [Katowice, Poland, near Auschwitz]. ... Bracht reports to me on the various concerns of the Province. The Poles are resigned to their fate, and the Jews have been pushed out (abgeschoben)\.*

*Nov 2, 1940 (I.8.406)*

*With the Führer. Epp has colonial questions. Koch and Forster, questions about the East. All want to unload their trash onto the General Government: Jews, the sick, the lazy, etc. And [Hans] Frank resists. Not entirely without reason. He would like to make Poland a model nation. But that goes too far. He cannot, and should not. According to the Führer, Poland is a large labor pool for us—a place to hold failed people and use them for lowly work. We have to get them from somewhere. Frank does not like this, but he has to. And the Jews will later be moved out (abschieben) of this area\.*

We see here a growing vocabulary of terms relating to the status of the Jews. The large majority refer to removing, deporting, or expelling: *aus-*

*heraus, herausdrängen, ausscheiden, abschieben, evakuieren, verfrachten, deportieren.* Later we find other related terms: *beseitigen, herausbringen, aufräumen, herausschaffen,* and others—some 18 in total, by my count (not including conjugates). This group is the most numerous, and the most benign. Two of these, *evakuieren* (evacuate) and *abschieben* (expel or push out), are especially popular with Goebbels.

A second group of terms include those that I will call 'ambiguous', in the sense that they have somewhat more ominous implications: *vernichten* (verb form of *Vernichtung*), *ausrotten, liquidieren, eliminieren,* and *auslöschen.* I've discussed the first of these already, and in the July 6 entry Goebbels first uses a

form of *ausrotten*. This word, literally meaning ‘to root out’, translates to the ambiguous ‘exterminate’ or to ‘eradicate’ (*ex-radix*, lit. ‘up-root’). Once again, none of these meanings entail death, killing, or murder. A plant that is *ausrottet* can be replanted and live; a family can be ‘up-rooted’ and reestablished elsewhere. The exterminationist suggestion that either *vernichten* or *ausrotten* necessarily imply murder is, quite literally, nonsense. [\[11\]](#)

I should note, by the way, that the German language does indeed have words for ‘killing’: *morden*, *ermorden*, *töten*, *totschlagen*, *totschiessen*. Goebbels had no shortage of alternatives if he wished to discuss literally killing the Jews. This is, after all, a personal and private diary. Consider his situation: Should the Germans win, he has nothing to fear. Should they lose, he must have known that his own death awaited, along with the ‘destruction’ of greater Germany—again, nothing to fear. Why hold back? So the reader might be wondering: Does Goebbels ever use such explicit terms? In fact he does: once. If I may temporarily leap ahead to one of his final entries, 14 March 1945, we read that certain soon-to-be-victorious Jews are calling for no mercy on the Germans—to which Goebbels replies, “Anyone in a position to do so should kill (*totschlagen*) these Jews like rats.” There we have it—an unambiguous call for murder. Except that it’s three years too late. One wonders, though, why, on the exterminationist thesis, Goebbels didn’t resort to such language much sooner. Perhaps it was only at the end, when the Jewish-backed Allies were slaughtering innocent Germans by the tens of thousands, that the Nazis began calling for their deaths. And perhaps by then it was justified. [\[12\]](#)

Into 1941 we start to move strongly toward—on the traditionalist view—systematic murder. But not until the second half of the year:

*Mar 18, 1941 (I.9.193) \**

*Vienna will soon be entirely Jew-free. And now it is Berlin’s turn. I am already discussing the question with the Führer and Dr. Frank. He puts the Jews to work, and they are indeed obedient. Later they will have to get out of Europe altogether (aus...heraus).*

*Mar 19, 1941 (I.9.195)*

*Early flight to Posen. ... Here, all sorts have been liquidated (liquidiert), above all the Jewish trash. This has to be. I explain the situation to Greiser.*

*Mar 22, 1941 (I.9.199)*

*I am deeply troubled about the cultural impact of foreign laborers working in the Reich. There are several hundred thousand. The harsh line towards prisoners of war is also somewhat mitigated. The Jews themselves cannot be evacuated (evakuiert) from Berlin because 30,000 are working in the armaments industry. Who, earlier, would have thought this possible?*

In the March 19 entry we find the first occurrence of another troublesome word, ‘liquidation’. It proves to be rather popular, appearing in eight different entries. The troublesome part is that, in many cases, it means something other than killing. Goebbels speaks of liquidating the “Jewish danger” (30 May 1942) and of liquidating Jewish marriages (6 December 1942). The word ‘liquidation’ means, primarily, ‘to make fluid.’ And this in fact is a fairly apt description of the deportation process: a large, entrenched Jewish community who had to be uprooted, made liquid, and then to flow out across the borders. Nothing in this entails killing. Nor at the time, in the 1940s, did the word necessarily mean murder. An article in the *London Times* had this to say: “The rest of the Jews in the General Government...would be liquidated, which means either transported eastward in cattle trucks to an unknown destination, or

killed where they stood” (4 December 1942; p. 3). Holocaust survivor Thomas Buergenthal (2009: 49) writes of his experience in the Kielce ghetto: “The ghetto was being liquidated or, in the words bellowing out of the loudspeakers, *Ausseidlung! Ausseidlung!* (‘Evacuation! Evacuation!’).” And later he comments, “After the liquidation of the labor camp...” (p. 56). Clearly the word means, and meant, something other than killing.

Obviously, ‘liquidate’ can mean killing, as can a huge variety of words under contrived circumstances. In Mafia circles, a ‘kiss’ can mean death. Motion pictures use a variety of silly terms: whack, pop, bump, waste, take for a ride, off, do in, and so on. In the case of Goebbels, we must ask once again, why would he go to lengths to use euphemisms or silly code words in a personal diary? And one in which, when motivated, he was happy to call a spade a spade?

June 1941 was an important month: the Germans invaded Russia, and the *Einsatzgruppen* were activated to protect the troops from partisan attacks. Here I refer back to Kershaw’s account of events. Through mid-1941, Kershaw admits, there was no true genocidal plan—despite Hitler’s infamous prophecy of January 1939. As of June 1941, “shooting or gassing to death all the Jews of Europe...was at this stage not in mind” (p. 463). Even through the end of the year, the alleged physical extermination plan “was still emerging” (p. 492). Hence the plan in mid-1941 was just as Goebbels had recorded: one of confinement, deportation, and ethnic cleansing.

Anti-partisan actions of the *Einsatzgruppen* began in June and July 1941; Jews were prominent among the partisans, and hence they were prominent among the victims. Then “there was a sharp escalation from around August onward,” both in the death toll and in the ranks of the shooters. Allegedly, the 3,000 *Einsatzgruppen* men recruited large numbers of “native collaborators” to help with the slaughter; Kershaw cites Browning (1995: 106) as stating that the combined troop levels rose to more than 300,000 by January 1943![\[13\]](#)

*Jun 20, 1941 (I.9.390)*

*Dr. Frank talks about the General Government. There one is already happily looking forward to expelling (abschieben) the Jews. Judaism in Poland gradually decays. A just punishment for inciting the people and instigating the war. The Führer has also prophesied that to the Jews\.*

*Jul 13, 1941 (II.1.58)*

*We are again getting reports from the eastern front on the terrible atrocities being committed by the Bolsheviks. The Moscow Jews continue to apply their infamous procedure, in order to push the outrages committed by them into our shoes. But the whole world agrees that there is not a word of truth in it\.*

Kershaw then cites a mysterious meeting between Hitler and Himmler in mid-July, during which the former “effectively...placed the ‘Jewish Question’...directly in Himmler’s hands” (p. 469). After this, we are to believe that Hitler was content to speak only of deportations, removals, and evacuations, all of which allegedly reconfirmed the implicit genocide command. When Hitler is quoted as saying, “Where the Jews are sent to, whether to Siberia or Madagascar, is immaterial,” Kershaw offers an amazing response: “The frame of mind [here] was overtly genocidal. The reference to Madagascar was meaningless.” Evacuation to Siberia was “genocide of a kind” (p. 471). But never mind this; as of July 1941, “no decision for the ‘Final Solution’—meaning the physical extermination of the Jews throughout Europe—had yet been taken. But genocide was in the air.”

*Aug 7, 1941 (II.1.189)*

*In the Warsaw ghetto there was some increase in typhus; although provisions have been made to ensure that it will not leave the ghetto. The Jews have always been carriers of infectious diseases. They must either be cooped up in a ghetto and left to themselves, or liquidated (liquidieren); otherwise they will always infect the healthy population of the civilized nations\.*

*Aug 11, 1941 (II.1.213)*

*In the [occupied] Baltic countries the tendency is to form their own governments, and to shake off the Germans as quickly as possible, in order to become stronger. In the large cities a punishment is inflicted upon the Jews. They are beaten to death en masse in the streets by the self-defense organizations of the Baltic peoples. That which the Führer prophesied comes true: that if the Jews succeeded in provoking a war again, they would thereby cease to exist (seine Existenz verlieren würde)\.*

A very important observation: the deaths of Jews in the Baltics were caused in large part by revenge-seeking natives, not roving German death squads. And in fact there was a good basis for this revenge, namely the murder and torture inflicted by the Jews of Stalin's GPU intelligence unit. [\[14\]](#)

In his "Table Talk" discussions of this time, Hitler argued that Germany was justified in deporting the Jews, and that furthermore they were doing it relatively humanely:

*If any people has the right to proceed to evacuations, it is we, for we've often had to evacuate our own population. Eight hundred thousand men had to emigrate from East Prussia alone. How humanely sensitive we are is shown by the fact that we consider it a maximum of brutality to have liberated our country from 600,000 Jews. And yet we accepted, without recrimination, and as something inevitable, the evacuation of our own compatriots! (1953/2000: 24)*

There seems to be no independent verification of the 600,000 figure, so we cannot identify from where they would have been deported, unfortunately. Meanwhile Goebbels continued his actions in Berlin:

*Aug 12, 1941 (II.1.218)*

*The Jewish Question has again become especially acute in the capital. We count 70,000 Jews in Berlin at the moment, of which 30,000 are not even working; the others live as parasites off the work of the host nation. This is an intolerable situation. The various departments of the upper-level Reich authorities still oppose a radical solution to this problem. But I won't let it go, for I don't want to experience the Jewish question solved again as it was in 1938—by the mob. But this is prevented in the long run only if we take timely and sweeping measures\.* ... *I also think it necessary that the Jews be given a badge. They are active in public life as defeatists and mood-spoilers. It is therefore imperative that they be recognized as Jews. They must not be allowed to speak on behalf of the German people. They have nothing to do with the German people, but rather must be excluded from (ausgeschlossen) the German people\.*

Goebbels clearly does not want a repeat of *Kristallnacht*. Also, this is the first mention of the "badge", or yellow Star of David, that the Jews were ultimately forced to wear.

*Aug 18, 1941 (II.1.254)*

*It's different with the Jewish Question. All Germans are presently against the Jews. The Jews must be put back in the box. When one realizes that there are still 75,000 Jews in Berlin, of which only 23,000 are working, it seems a grotesque fact. One cannot even inform the German people, or else there would surely be pogroms. We Germans thus have the honor to conduct the war, and meanwhile the parasitical*

*Jews, who are waiting for our defeat in order to exploit it for themselves, are sustained by our national strength. This condition is absolutely outrageous. I will ensure that it will soon be stopped\.*

*Aug 19, 1941 (II.1.265-266)*

*Regarding the Jewish Question, I completely prevail with the Führer. He agrees that we will introduce a large, visible Jew-badge for all the Jews in the Reich, and which must be worn in public; then we can remove (beseitigt) the danger that the Jews will act as defeatists and complainers without being recognized. Also, if in the future they do not work, they will be given smaller rations than the German people. That is only right and proper. He who does not work, should not eat. It's all we need in Berlin, for example, that of 76,000 Jews only 26,000 work, and the rest not only don't work, but they live on the rations of the Berlin population! Additionally, the Führer tells me that, as soon as the first transport opportunity becomes available, the Berlin Jews should be pushed off (abzuschieben) to the East. There they will have to make do under a harsh climate\.*

*We discuss the Jewish problem. The Führer is convinced that his prophecy in the Reichstag—that if Jewry succeeded in provoking yet another world war, it would end with their destruction (Vernichtung)—is confirmed. It is coming true in the following weeks and months with an almost uncanny certainty. In the East, the Jews must pay the price; in Germany they have paid in part already, and they will pay more in the future. Their last resort is North America, and there they will also have to pay before long\.*

*Jewry is a foreign element among civilized nations, and its activities in the past three decades has been so devastating that the people's reaction is understandable—indeed, one might say, a compulsion of nature. In any case, in the world to come the Jews will not have anything to laugh about. In Europe today there is a united front against Jewry. This is already apparent in the entire European press—and not only on this question, but also on many other matters there exists a thoroughly unified opinion\.*

So here we have a clear and unambiguous statement: that the *Vernichtung* of the Jewish race meant the complete exclusion from society and, ultimately, its physical removal.

*Aug 20, 1941 (II.1.278)*

*On the Jewish Question, I am now beginning to take action. Because the Führer has allowed me to introduce a badge for the Jews, I believe I will be able to accomplish this marking very quickly, without carrying out the legal reforms that would normally be required in such a situation. ... Public life in Berlin must quickly be cleaned (gereinigt) [of Jews]. If at the moment it is not possible to make Berlin a Jew-free city, at least they should not appear in public any longer. Additionally, the Führer told me that I may expel (abschieben) the Jews from Berlin immediately after the end of our campaign in the East. Berlin must become a Jew-free city. It is outrageous and scandalous that 76,000 Jews, most of whom are parasites, can roam the capital of the German Reich. They destroy not only the streetscape, but also the mood\.*

*Although it will be very different when they wear a badge, we can leave it at that until they are removed. We have to approach this problem without any sentimentality. One need only imagine what the Jews would do to us, if they had the power to do so—as we have the power to do. In any case, I remain alert regarding further action on the Jewish Question. If one must also overcome bureaucratic and partly sentimental resistance in the higher Reich offices, I will be neither surprised nor deterred. I took up the fight against Jewry in Berlin in 1926, and it is my ambition not to rest until the last Jew has left Berlin\.*

Throughout the summer Hitler resisted mass evacuations. Then, according to Kershaw: “Suddenly, in mid-September, Hitler changed his mind. There was no overt indication of the reason” (p. 477). Here’s one overt indication: on September 12 Roosevelt ordered the U.S. navy to begin sinking German ships. This was only the latest in a string of aggressive and provocative actions by the Americans, which began with their shadowing of German freighter and supply ships in late 1939, and included the Lend-Lease Act of March 1941 that authorized military assistance for the Allied nations, explicitly ending U.S. neutrality.

A Himmler letter from this time cites Hitler’s authorization to begin with an initial shipment of 60,000 Jews to the Lodz ghetto. This action was key to the “gathering whirlwind of extermination,” says Kershaw. But even this was no Final Solution order. “It is doubtful whether a single, comprehensive decision of such a kind was ever made.” Instead, “numerous local and regional Nazi leaders...seized on the opportunity...to start killing Jews in their own areas” (p. 481). The killing was as yet haphazard; a “coordinated, comprehensive programme of total genocide...would still take some months to emerge.”

*Sep 24, 1941 (II.1.480-481, 485)*

*Also with respect to the Jewish Question, I have some important things to say to Heydrich. For the Berlin Jews, we will drive away the desire to hide their badges; and anyway, I am of the opinion that the Jews must be evacuated (evakuieren) from Berlin as quickly as possible. This will be the case as soon as we have settled the military issues in the East. In the end, they will all be transported (transportieren) to the camps designed by the Bolsheviks. These camps were built by the Jews; it is only right that they are now populated by the Jews\.*

*The Führer is of the opinion that the Jews must, after all, be removed from (herausgebracht) all of Germany. The first cities to be made Jew-free are Berlin, Vienna, and Prague. Berlin is the first in line, and I am hopeful that in the course of this year we are able to transport out (abzutransportieren) a substantial part of Berlin’s Jews to the East\.*

The first trains left Berlin on 18 October 1941.

*Oct 21, 1941 (II.2.169)*

*We are also now gradually beginning with the expulsion (Ausweisung) of Jews from Berlin to the East. Several thousand have already been put in motion. At first they go to Lodz [Poland]. Thereupon commences a big excitement. The Jews send anonymous letters to the foreign press seeking help, and in fact some messages seep through to foreign countries. I forbid further information about that for the foreign correspondents. Nevertheless, it will not prevent this from expanding further in the coming days. Nothing will change. While it is, at the moment, unpleasant to see this issue discussed in front of the world stage, one must accept this disadvantage. The main thing is that the capital will become Jew-free. And I will not rest until this goal is fully achieved\.*

Four days later Hitler made this well-known comment:

*From the rostrum of the Reichstag, I prophesied to Jewry that, in the event of war’s proving inevitable, the Jew would disappear from Europe. That race of criminals has on its conscience 2 million dead of the First World War, and now already hundreds of thousands more. Let nobody tell me that, all the same, we can’t park them in the marshy parts of Russia! Who’s worrying about our troops? It’s not a bad idea, by the way, that public rumor attributes to us a plan to exterminate the Jews. Terror is a salutary thing. (1953/2000: 87)*

So we see here (1) continued endorsement for literal deportation, (2) no talk of killing, murder, gas chambers, etc, (3) an equation between 'extermination' and deportation, and (4) a minimal concern for secrecy. The fact that Hitler finds some use in the rumor mill is interesting, a kind of unanticipated fringe benefit. But he perhaps did not anticipate how talk of extermination would play in the Anglo world. Two months before he made the above comment, the *New York Times* (August 25; p. 3) reported that, "unless the Nazis were defeated, wholesale extermination would be the lot of all Jews" (... "including those in the United States and Britain"!)—and here, 'extermination' means murder, no doubt.

Then an important Goebbels entry that continues the account from August 11:

*Nov 2, 1941 (II.2.221-222)*

*We fly early in the morning to Vilnius [Lithuania]. ... We were met by Lt Colonel Zehnpfennig, who drove us through the city. Vilnius has a quarter million inhabitants, and nearly one quarter are Jewish. However, the ranks of the Jews have been greatly thinned by the Lithuanians after the invasion of German troops. The Jews were active primarily as [Soviet] GPU spies and informers, and countless Lithuanian intellectuals and citizens owe their deaths to them. The revenge tribunal established by the Lithuanians and Poles, being the majority of the city, has been horrifying. Thousands [of Jews] have been shot, and even now hundreds more as well. They have now all been rounded up into their ghettos. That they have not all been killed is due only to the fact that the Jews control the entire Vilnian handcraft industry, and the Lithuanians are completely dependent on them\.*

*The city shows hardly any traces of war. But on a short drive through the ghetto, the view is horrifying. Here the Jews squat in rows, hideous forms, not to be looked at let alone touched. The Jews have created their own administration, which also has a police function. They stand at the entrance to the ghetto, which is separated from the rest of the city, on guard and at attention. Even 10 years ago I would not have dreamed that something like this would again be the case. Terrible figures lurk in the streets, which I would not like to meet at night. The Jews are the lice of civilized man. They must somehow be eradicated (ausrotten), otherwise they will again play their tormenting and troublesome role. Only if one advances with the necessary brutality can one be finished with them. When they are spared, one will later be their victim\.*

*Nov 17, 1941 (II.2.304)*

*In a published telegram, Churchill openly stands on the side of the Jews. He is a consummate servant of the Jews\.*

*Nov 18, 1941 (II.2.309)*

*Heydrich told me about his intentions regarding the expulsion (Abschiebung) of Jews from the Reich. The question is more difficult than we had first suspected. In any case, 15,000 Jews will have to stay in Berlin because they are employed in the war effort and other dangerous work. Also, a number of elderly Jews cannot be pushed off (abgeschoben) to the East. For them, a Jewish ghetto in a small town in the protectorate will be arranged. The third phase, which will begin early next year, will follow the procedure I have proposed to clear the area city by city, such that when the evacuation (Evakuierung) in a city begins, it will also be finished as soon as possible, and the effect on public opinion will be neither too long nor too harmful. Heydrich's approach on this question is very consistent. He is something I had not previously realized: a shrewd political thinker\.*

So no evacuation either for workers or the elderly. One wonders if genocide was still 'in the air'.

Nov 22, 1941 (II.2.340-341)

*Also, regarding the Jewish Question, the Führer fully agrees with my views. He wants an energetic policy against the Jews, but we do not want to cause any unnecessary difficulties. Evacuation (Evakuierung) of the Jews will be undertaken city by city. It is still uncertain when it will be Berlin's turn; but when its turn comes, the evacuation will be carried out as quickly as possible to the very end\.*

On the first of December, Hitler offered some philosophical thoughts on the social effect of Jewry:

*[The] destructive role of the Jew has in a way a providential explanation. If nature wanted the Jew to be the ferment that causes people to decay, thus providing these peoples with an opportunity for a healthy reaction, in that case, people like St. Paul and Trotsky are, from our point of view, the most valuable. By the fact of their presence, they provoke the defensive reaction of the attacked organism. Dietrich Eckart once told me that in all his life he had known just one good Jew: Otto Weininger, who killed himself on the day when he realized that the Jew lives on the decay of peoples. (1953/2000: 141)*

It is in this month, as we know, that the European war becomes a truly world war, as Germany—after some two years of provocation—declares war on the U.S. in the wake of Pearl Harbor. Also this month, on the orthodox view, a milestone occurs: Chelmno begins its extermination process, with gas vans powered by diesel engines. Evidently, then, genocide was more than in the air; it was on the ground running. And Goebbels, in truth, does seem to ramp up his rhetoric; he makes his first overt references to the deaths of Jews:

Dec 13, 1941 (II.2.498-499)

*As concerns the Jewish Question, the Führer is determined to make a clean sweep (reinen Tisch—lit. 'clean table'). He had prophesied to the Jews that if they once again brought about a World War they would experience their own destruction (Vernichtung). This was not just an empty phrase. The World War is here, and the destruction of Jewry must be the necessary consequence. This question must be seen without sentimentality. We are not here in order to have sympathy with the Jews, rather we sympathize with our own German people. If the German people have now once again sacrificed as many as 160,000 dead in the Eastern campaign, then the authors of this bloody conflict must pay with their lives (mit ihrem Leben bezahlen müssen)\.*

Dec 14, 1941 (II.2.503)

*The early curfew in Paris has been abolished, but a plethora of Jews remain to be pushed out (abgeschoben) of occupied France to the eastern region. In many cases this is equivalent to a death sentence. The remaining Jews will think hard before stirring up trouble or sabotage against the German troops. Meanwhile General von Stülpnagel can conduct the execution of 100 Jews and communists. That will provide a very plausible and psychologically-adept explanation for the Parisian population, and will not fail to have an effect\.*

If deportation is sometimes the “equivalent of a death sentence,” and many will “pay with their lives,” we are left wondering how, exactly, and in what numbers, they will die. I trust that there is a clear difference between (a) *many* dying from disease, exposure, lack of medical care, periodic shootings, etc, and (b) *all* dying in a complex and systematic gassing operation. There is no doubt that concentrating and deporting thousands or millions of people in wartime would lead to many deaths. But this is not genocide. The next entry is telling:



Dec 18, 1941 (II.2.533-534)

*I speak with the Führer regarding the Jewish Question. He is determined to take consistent action and not be deterred by bourgeois sentimentality. Above all, the Jews must leave the Reich (aus...heraus). We discuss the possibilities for especially clearing out (räumen) Berlin as quickly as possible. Objections are sure to be raised here—from the Four Year Plan, from the Economics Ministry—because about 13,000 Jews are employed in the armaments industry in Berlin; but, with some good will, they can be replaced by Bolshevik prisoners of war. In any case we will tackle this problem as soon as possible, especially when we have the transport capacity to move this body of people. Berlin cannot count as absolutely consolidated as long as Jews are living and working in the capital. Besides, the bourgeois Schlappmeier has ever-new excuses to save the Jews. Earlier it was Jewish money and influence; now it is the Jewish workers. German intellectuals and elite have no anti-Jewish instinct at all. Their vigilance is not sharp. It is therefore necessary that we solve this problem, since it is likely that, if it remains unsolved, it will lead to the most devastating consequences after we are gone. The Jews should all be pushed off (abgeschoben) to the East. We are not very interested in what becomes of them after that. They have wished this fate upon themselves, they have started the war, and they must now pay the price\.*

“We are not very interested in what becomes of them after that.” Harsh and brutal, perhaps, but clearly far less than genocide. The same thought was echoed by Hans Frank, in a memo of December 16:

*What is to happen to the Jews [after evacuation]? ... We have in the General Government an estimated 2.5 million Jews—perhaps with those closely related to Jews and what goes with it, now 3.5 million Jews. We can't shoot these 3.5 million Jews, we can't poison them...[\[15\]](#)*

Obviously he and Goebbels, at least, were unaware of any program of genocide.

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## Notes

- [\[1\]](#) The first 6 or 7 years of entries were every 2nd or 3rd day. But by 1930 he was rigorously recording his thoughts daily. Until mid-1941 he wrote them himself; afterward he dictated the entries, and they became considerably longer.
- [\[2\]](#) Alfred Rosenberg was also well-educated, having earned a PhD in engineering in 1917. But in spite of his role as chief ideologist for the NSDAP, he was not nearly as influential in the Nazi hierarchy as Goebbels was. For most of the war years Rosenberg served as *Reichsminister* for the occupied Eastern territories.
- [\[3\]](#) L. Lochner, in Goebbels (1948: 25).
- [\[4\]](#) *Ibid.*, p. viii.
- [\[5\]](#) I discount the Eichmann recollection of Heydrich: “The *Führer* has ordered the physical extermination of the Jews.” Virtually no one on either side of the Holocaust debate accepts Eichmann’s trial testimony as truth.
- [\[6\]](#) “What began in 1941 was a process of destruction not planned in advance, not organized centrally by any agency. There was no blueprint and there was no budget for destructive

measures. [These measures] were taken step by step, one step at a time. Thus came about not so much a plan being carried out, but an incredible meeting of minds, a consensus—mind reading by a far-flung bureaucracy.” *New York Newsday*, Feb 23, 1983; Part II, p. 3.

- [7] Corresponds to page 694 of the (much-longer) Internet version of the book.
- [8] One book notably lacking in much citation of the diary is Browning’s *The Origins of the Final Solution* (2004). This massive work, published four years after Kershaw’s comparable book, should have made equally good use of the diaries. But one struggles in vain to find more than a half-dozen quotations. This is revealing: Browning, publishing in the U.S., clearly did not want to draw attention to those many troublesome entries referring to deportations, evacuations, and the like. Kershaw was at least honest enough to cite them, even as he was papering them over.
- [9] Obviously this is a judgment call. There are many minor or inconsequential references to Jews, Jewish media or propaganda, Bolshevik Jews, Jewish films, etc. By a rough count, one finds 25-30 entries per volume that mention Jews (about one reference every third day, on average). Thus of the 16 volumes that I cover exhaustively, there are some 450 potentially-relevant entries.
- [10] Other definitions include “to ruin structure or condition”, “to neutralize”, “to defeat.”
- [11] The diary entry of 6 February 1945 shows this very clearly. Goebbels is discussing the common goal of Germany’s enemies, namely, “to destroy (*vernichten*) Germany and to eradicate (*auszurotten*) the German people.” In neither case is he even faintly contemplating the literal mass murder of the entire German population.
- [12] There are other threatening passages, including those referring to ‘liquidation’ and to the Jews ‘paying with their lives.’ I address these in due course.
- [13] “Units of native collaborators had already played a significant role in the killing process. At the end of 1941, the strength of these units had reached 33,000. By June 1942, it was 165,000; by January 1943, 300,000. As Nebe rightly indicated, the task of killing Russian Jewry with the 3,000 men of the *Einsatzgruppen* was ‘impossible’.”
- [14] A related event occurred in the Ukraine in the 1930s; this was known as the Holodomor, and was a state-created famine that killed some 5 million people.
- [15] As cited in Kershaw (2000: 491).

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